(b) and (c) It is the Policy of the Government to allow the exports of item of mass consumption in such a manner that it does not compromise the food security system. For this purpose, except Non-Basmati rice the exports of Food Grains are either under licensing or subject to registration with Agricultural Processed Food and Export Development Authority (APEDA). The import of cereals is canalised through Food Corporation of India (FCI) and import of wheat flour is restricted and subject to licensing. After actual exports or imports have been effected, the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta complies the export-import statistics. The system in vogue (computerised) is working satisfactorily.

(d) No. Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

CBI Inquiry about STC

3235. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an inquiry had been conducted by CBI in respect of State Trading Corporation;

(b) if so, the details thereof together with the amount involved therein;

(c) whether any action has been taken on the said Report;

(d) if so, the details of officials involved in the racket; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (e) In some cases the investigation has been completed by CBI and are at the stage of trial in different courts. Some cases have been closed by CBI after investigation. In a few cases, CBI is conducting its investigations.

Removal of import Curbs

3236. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:
SHRI O.P. KOHLI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'EU demand removal of import curbs in two years' which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 21st March, 1997;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) the status of balance of payment as on date and the estimated projection of BOP by June, 1999, the deadline given by EU; and

(d) the item and the agenda for discussion of Brussels scheduled during April, 1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) The news item referred to in part (a) of the question had appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 22 March, 1997. The news item draws on a press briefing by Mr. Herve Jouanjean, Director, European Commission, at the conclusion of bilateral discussions with India on issues relating to quantitative restrictions maintained on imports for safequarding the balance of payments.

It is recalled that during the consultations held with India in Geneva in January, 1997, the Committee on Balance of payment Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation, after hearing the statements made by India and other Members and the International Monetary Fund, invited India to present a plan to eliminate the quantitative restrictions on imports maintained by India for balance of payments purposes and agreed to resume the consulations in the week beginning 2 June, 1997 to consider the plan.

As a follow up of discussions held in

the Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions in January, 1997, India has been holding bilateral consultations with its major trading partners and WTO Members. Inter Ministerial discussions are also being held to finalise India's plan which will be considered in the WTO Committee in June, 1997.

During the discussions held with the European Commission on 20-21 March, 1997 at New Delhi the European Commission maintained that in view of improvement in the balance of payments situation in India there was no justification for continued recourse to the balance of payments cover under Article XVIII,: B of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and that India should announce a comprehensive phase out plan for removal of residual quantitative restrictions maintained on imports for balance of payment purposes.

The foreign currency reserves of India were USD 22.4 billion on 2 May, 1997. Projections of foreign exchange reserves are not maintained.

A meeting of the Indo-EU Joint Commission is scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 12-13 May, 1997 at which issues such as quantitative restrictions maintained for balance of paymets purposes are also likely to be discussed.

विदेशों के साथ व्यापार समझौते

3237. **श्री अजीत जोगी:** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) 1996-97 के दौरान सरकार ने विदेशों के साथ कितने व्यापार समझौते किए हैं;

(ख) तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) इन समझौतों से भारतीय वस्तुओं के निर्यात में अनुमानतः कितनी वृद्धि होगी?

वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बोल्ला बुल्ली रमैया): (क) और (ख) महोदय, वर्ष 1996-97 के दौरान सरकार ने दूसरे देशों के साथ व्यापार और आर्थिक सहयोग बढ़ाने के लिए 4 व्यापार करारों पर हस्ताक्षर किए हैं। वे देश हैं: इथोपिया, वियतनाम, त्रिनिदाद तथा टोबागों और बलगारिया।

(ग) भारतीय वस्तुओं का निर्यात विभिन्न कारणों पर निर्भर करता है। जैसे भारतीय निर्यातकों तथा विदेशी आयातकों के बीच व्यापार सम्पर्क स्थापित करना तथा बातचीत करना और वस्तुओं की लागत प्रतिस्पर्द्धात्मकता और व्यापार करार के साथ-साथ सरकार की नीति। अतः व्यापार करार के फलस्वरूप निर्यात में वृद्धि का अनुमान लगाना कठिन है।

Ban on Import of Plastic Wastes

3238. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have banned import of used plastic in the form of waste or scrap;

(b) if so, the details of norms governing import of plastic wastes tightened by Government;

(c) whether the import of waste or scrap is causing concern for the environment; and

(d) if so, to what extent the norms to tighten import of plastic wastes is going to curb the import of wastes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Under the current Export and Import Policy, the import of used plastic in the form of waste or scrap is not permitted. However, import of such plastic scrap/ waste which constitute those fractions of plastic generated by various plastic processing operations or those fractions generated in the production process of plastic in plant, which have not been put to any use whatsoever and as such can be termed as virgin or new material which can be recycled into viable commercial products using standard plastic processing techniques but without involving any process of cleaning, whereby effluents are generated, is permitted against import licence as per the guidelines/norms as